
Forced marriages and child marriages

Doc. 9966

13 October 2003

Motion for a resolution

presented by Mrs Bargholtz and others

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only the members who have signed it

We have during these last years been made aware of several cases of serious violations of fundamental rights of young immigrant women. By refusing to accept the life and marriage the parents have decided for them, they have been in deep conflict with their families and in several cases been seriously hurt and even murdered. This problem also concerns young immigrant men but to a lesser extent.

It is not unusual that immigrant girls are married off by their parents in their countries of origin as young as twelve or thirteen. Later they will be formally married in their new homeland at the legal age. In between they live a life as if married, they do not continue their schooling, they do not learn the language of their new homeland and they become very isolated in the society.

A book recently published in Norway, "Feminin Integrering" (Female Integration) (according to an article in the International Herald Tribune, 27 June 2003), is based on a report to the Norwegian Parliament. It presents the results of a study of immigrant-group marriage patterns in Norway. The study shows that members of most of Norway's non-Western immigrants are, in overwhelming numbers, not just marrying within their own ethnic groups but are marrying spouses – often their own cousins – from their countries of origin.

These marriages – invariably arranged and often forced – have two chief motives. One is to provide the foreign spouse with Norwegian residency rights under the "family reunification" provision of immigration law. The other is to resist integration by injecting into the European branch of the family a fresh dose of "traditional values". This has, among other things, resulted in a pattern of exploitation of young people.

According to this book the figures for "fetching marriages" seem to increase.

Forced marriages and child marriages must be prevented. Although this is an extremely sensitive topic, it must be tackled. Council of Europe member states should be encouraged to take the appropriate measures to ensure that women have complete freedom to marry and that they suffer no negative consequences whatever their choice.

Signed ^[1]:

Bargholtz, Sweden, UEL

Anttila, Finland, LDR

Bruce, United Kingdom, LDR

Cekuolis, Lithuania, LDR
Coifan, Romania, LDR
Cosarciuc, Moldova, LDR
Dimic, Serbia and Montenegro, LDR
Einarsson, Sweden, UEL
Eörsi, Hungary, LDR
Fehr, Switzerland, LDR
Guardans, Spain, LDR
Gunnarsson, Iceland, LDR
Hägg, Sweden, SOC
Hancock, United Kingdom, LDR
Högmark, Sweden, EPP/CD
Jacic, Slovenia, LDR
Jarab, Czech Republic, LDR
Kaikkonen, Finland, LDR
Kocharyan, Armenia, LDR
Milotinova, Bulgaria, LDR
Nabholz-Haidegger, Switzerland, LDR
Ohlsson, Sweden, SOC
Pericleous Papadopoulos, Cyprus, LDR
Russell-Johnston, United Kingdom, LDR
Szalay, Hungary, LDR
Velikov, Bulgaria, LDR

[\[1\]](#) SOC: Socialist Group
EPP: Group of the European People's Party
EDG: European Democratic Group
LDR : Liberal, Democratic and Reformers' Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: not registered in a group